

SUBJECT : SKOB-MARICHKA Confrontation.

REFERENCE : OELA 1302, 31 January 1956

DATE OF MEMO: 24 July 1957.

1. The SMOTH paper emphasizes the view that SMOTH was committed to hold SKOB to 1 Sept 1955 only. It would appear that, strictly speaking, SMOTH is correct, although there is an ambiguity in the S.I.S.-C.I.A. written agreement in that one clause thereof binds SMOTH to keep SKOB "in circumstances denying him all opportunity of communicating with the RIS until the outcome of the TARAS operation becomes known to you." SMOTH interprets this passage as in intent modified by the 1 Sept deadline, although that deadline is not repeated at precisely that juncture in the paper.

2. The different interpretations aside, however, it would seem that the situation changed radically after the confrontation, and that the written agreement was no longer valid. SMOTH recognizes this in their decision, after the confrontation, not to infiltrate SKOB, although the written agreement was drawn up with the SMOTH intent to use SKOB, if clean.

3. All agree that the unilateral SMOTH decision to reveal to SKOB that MARICHKA had been under RIS control was a grave mistake. From the view of SMOTH's interest's, that revelation destroyed SKOB's morale since his bona fides was thereby seriously questioned and the operation had to be scratched. From the CIA viewpoint, MARICHKA's confession was compromised, and the TARAS operation put in grave danger. From the CIA viewpoint, it was very important that SKOB be under strict control and should not be used operationally. On balance, perhaps, SMOTH lost more than C.I.A., since SKOB, apparently clean, had to be scratched operationally, all because of C.I.A. initiative in questioning his bona fides. Had we not cut SMOTH in, their SKOB operation presumably would have gone on.

4. Paragraph 8 of the SMOTH position (above reference) seems too brief and disproportionate. The undersigned had the distinct impression that SMOTH keenly regretted the disclosure and gave every assurance that SKOB would be held tightly, no deadline being mentioned. Again, it seems to the undersigned that the original SMOTH-CIA written agreement was no longer applicable in view of the radically changed circumstances. The undersigned feels that the SMOTH position, after receipt of the undersigned's protest, was that they would do anything to protect the TARAS operation. The Canadian angle, for example, was put much more positively, as a ready and most secure way of getting SKOB to an area where any leakage from him would do the least damage.

5. Note that in Paragraph 10, above reference, SMOTH states that they, after SKOB had been documented, "exercised no further control over" SKOB's "movements and activities." This appears to be a chivalier way of protecting the security of an operation of an Allied service, especially when the history of the given case is considered. Knowing SKOB better than we, knowing of his desire to meet BANDERA and other emigres, ~~SMOTH~~ SMOTH "knew" of his intended visit, but did not sanction it. The distinction escapes the undersigned; the point is if it was not "sanctioned" it should have been prohibited. SMOTH failure to frustrate ~~SMOTH~~ SKOB's travel plans or to consult with CIA and ask our opinion seems important.

6. The undersigned did not request that SMOTH make available to him material "which CIA themselves had provided in Washington." What SMOTH has in mind here specifically is not clear. Re the enlarged photo of SKOB: the undersigned did inform SMOTH that he knew nothing about MARICHKA's being shown an enlarged picture of SKOB, and he might have used an excuse such as it might have been "lost in their offices." That was intentional, because the enlarged photo was never shown to MARICHKA. It was not shown to her, as the then Headquarters case officer explained to the undersigned, because the enlarged picture was unmistakably identical with that of the true, smaller picture of SKOB that had already been shown MARICHKA. Not only would it not have helped MARICHKA identify SKOB, but the large picture would have tipped to MARICHKA our extraordinary interest in a given person (SKOB) in that a ~~small~~ small picture of him shown her for possible identification was followed up by the presentation of a larger picture of the same person.

7. To the best of the undersigned's knowledge, SMOTH's paper (above reference) was never answered and represents the last written exchange on the matter. The undersigned first saw the referenced dispatch sometime after 20 May, 1957, the date it was signed by SR/G OP/CE.

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